Syllabus subtopic: Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Prelims and Mains focus: About the key features of the Bill and the controversy around it, constitutional provisions related to Anglo Indians

News: Parliament on Thursday passed a Constitutional amendment giving a 10-year extension to reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies and ending the provision for nomination of two Anglo Indians.

About the Bill

The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Amendment) Bill, 2019, was passed unanimously by the Rajya Sabha, two days after it was passed by the Lok Sabha.

All 163 members present voted to pass the amendment, after a heated exchange between the ruling party and the Opposition.

The Bill extended the reservation for SCs and STs in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, which was due to end on January 25, 2020, for 10 years, the seventh such 10-year extension given since the Constitution was enacted in 1950.

The Bill also ended the provision for nomination of Anglo Indians too.

Provisions related to Anglo Indians

According to Article 366 (2) an Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India or born within such territory and whose parents habitually were resident in India and not established for temporary purposes only.

The Constitution empowers the President under Article 331 to nominate maximum of two members of the Anglo Indian Community to the Lok Sabha, if he/ she is of the opinion that the community is not adequately represented. The president will act on the basis of this constitutional provision only when no Anglo Indian had been elected to the House of people in General Elections.

Under Article 333, the Governor of a state is of the opinion that Anglo Indian Community is not adequately represented in the state assembly, he/she can nominate one member.

Note: The Anglo Indian Community was entitled to special educational grants under the Article 337 of the Constitution for a period of 10 years. During the first three years, this grant was what the community had been receiving in 1947. Thereafter, it was to be progressively reduced @10%.